

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

# Statistical Bulletin

## Quarters 1-3 2013/14

(April to December 2013)



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**Note:**

**All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change.**

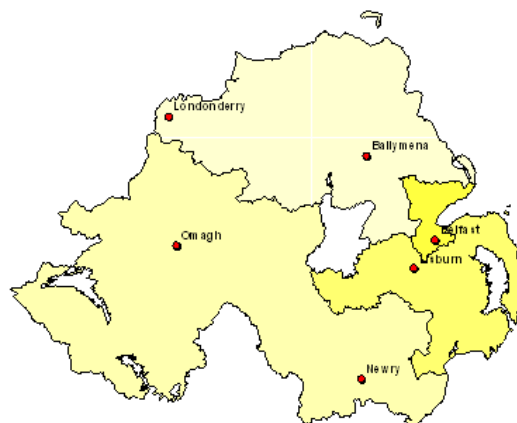
## Introduction

### The Public Prosecution Service

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS), which is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions, is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police, it also considers cases investigated by other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs.

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not to prosecute and to have responsibility for the conduct of criminal proceedings. A range of options is also available for dealing with offenders other than through prosecution. These options include restorative cautioning, informed warnings and youth conferencing. Prosecutors may also refer offenders to the NI Driver Improvement Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme.

### PPS Regional Office Locations



The PPS is a regionally based organisation. There are four regions, each of which is headed by a Regional Prosecutor. The Regional Prosecutor has overall responsibility for decisions as to prosecution in that region, with the exception of those cases which are considered by prosecutors in Headquarters. Headquarters Sections deal with specialised areas of work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy Section and High Court and International Matters.

### About this Bulletin

This bulletin presents key statistics on the activity of the PPS, including caseloads and prosecutorial decisions. It also includes data on the outcomes of prosecutions at court. The report provides information for the first nine months of the 2013/14 financial year (i.e. 1 April to 31 December 2013) and includes comparisons for the equivalent period in 2012/13. Where appropriate detailed notes have been provided, which give an explanation of the relevant PPS processes and procedures.

All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change. For further details, see 'User Information' on page 21.

If you have any feedback, questions or requests for further information about this bulletin, please contact us as follows:

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## Summary of Key Points

Figures quoted are for the first nine months of the financial year, 1 April to 31 December 2013, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes provided (see pages 18 - 20).

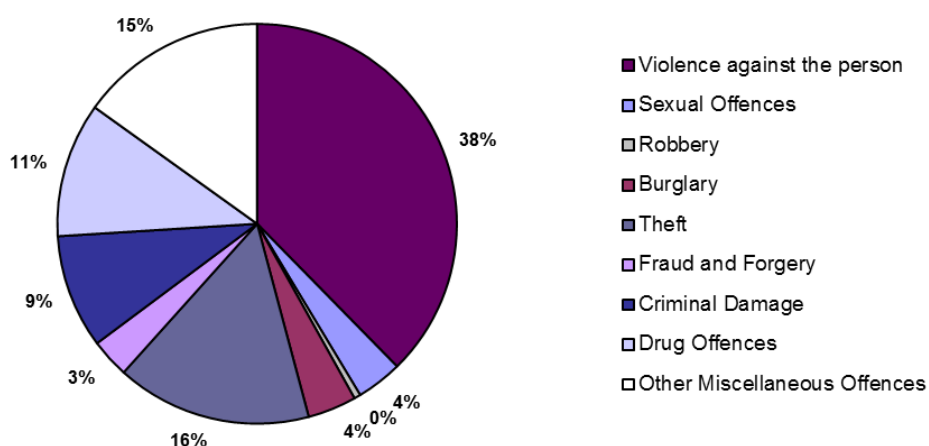
### Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 1a)

- The PPS received 35,661 files during the first three quarters of the financial year. This was a decrease of 6.9% on the corresponding period of 2012/13 (38,287).
- Half (50%) of all files received during the current period related to summary offences, 45% to hybrid offences and the remaining 4% to indictable offences.

### Files Received from Police by Recorded Crime Offence Group (Table 1b)

- During the first three quarters of 2013/14, PPS received a total of 34,277 files from police. This represents a 7.4% decrease on the same period of 2012/13 (36,999). The number of files relating to recorded ('notifiable') offences decreased by 7.9% while the number of files relating to other ('non-notifiable') offences fell by 6.2%.
- In terms of files received by recorded crime offence group, just under seven tenths fell into three categories; 'violence against the person' (38%), 'theft' (16%) and 'other miscellaneous offences' (15%).
- All recorded crime offence groups, have shown a reduction in the number of files received compared with the corresponding nine months of 2012/13.

**Files Received from Police (notifiable offences) by Recorded Crime Offence Group  
Quarters 1 - 3 2013/14**



### Files Submitted to PPS Departmental Section by Source Department / Agency (Table 1c)

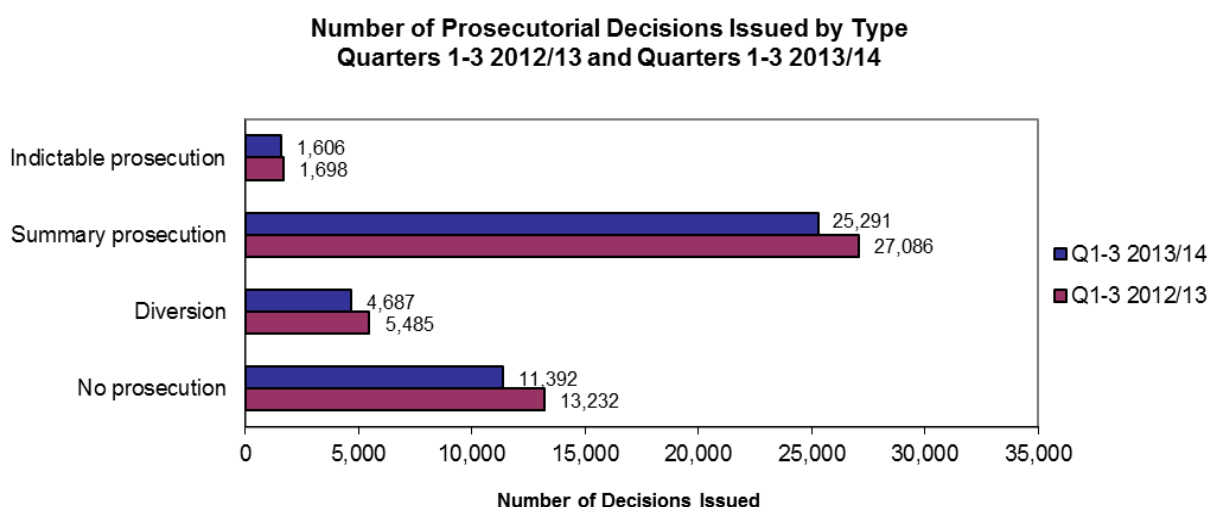
- A total of 1,186 files were submitted to PPS Departmental Section by departments and agencies during the first three quarters of the financial year, representing a 9.6% increase on the equivalent period in 2012/13 (1,082).
- During the current period, the majority of the files were submitted either by the Department for Social Development (41%) or the Driver and Vehicle Agency (37%).

### Information Requests Submitted to Police by Request Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 2)

- A total of 19,569 information requests were submitted to police during the first nine months of the financial year, an increase of 2.3% on the corresponding period of 2012/13.
- Fifty-six percent of all requests submitted during the current period were 'Post Decision Information Requests', 31% were 'Decision Information Requests' and 13% were 'Full File Requests'.

### Prosecutorial Decisions Issued by Decision Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 3a)

- During the first three quarters of 2013/14, 42,976 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS. This was 9.5% less than the total issued during the same period of 2012/13 (47,501).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during the first nine months of the financial year. Of the 42,976 decisions issued, almost three-quarters (74%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (26,897) or for diversion from the courts (4,687). This was similar to the equivalent period in 2012/13 (72%).



- Comparing the first three quarters of 2012/13 and 2013/14, there was a decrease of 6.6% in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of a 6.6% decrease in summary prosecution decisions and a decline of 5.4% in indictable prosecution decisions. The numbers of diversionary and no prosecution decisions fell by 14.5% and 13.9% respectively.

#### **Prosecutorial Decisions Issued – Reasons for No Prosecution by PPS Region / Function (Table 3b)**

- Of the 11,392 no prosecution decisions issued during the first nine months of the financial year, the vast majority (95%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 5% did not pass the public interest test.

#### **Average Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type – PPS Regions (Table 3c)**

- The average number of calendar days required for the issue of an indictable prosecution decision during the first three quarters of the financial year was 160, compared to 215 days during the equivalent period in 2012/13. This was an improvement of 25.6%.
- During the current period, summary prosecution decisions required an average of 21 days. This was 9 days less than during the first three quarters of 2012/13 (30), representing a 30.0% improvement.
- The time taken for diversionary decisions varied according to the type of diversion issued, with informed warnings requiring an average of 17 days, cautions 15 days and youth conferences 16 days.

#### **Summonses Issued in Police Cases by Service Method and PPS Region (Table 4)**

- A total of 24,313 summonses were issued in police cases during the first nine months of the financial year, a decrease of 9.6% on 2012/13. Comparing 2012/13 and 2013/14, the number of summonses issued via personal service experienced a greater decline than those issued by post, down 13.4% and 7.7% respectively.
- Sixty-eight percent of summonses issued during this period were served on the defendant by post and the remainder via personal service by police.

#### **Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court by Outcome and PPS Region / Function (Table 5a)**

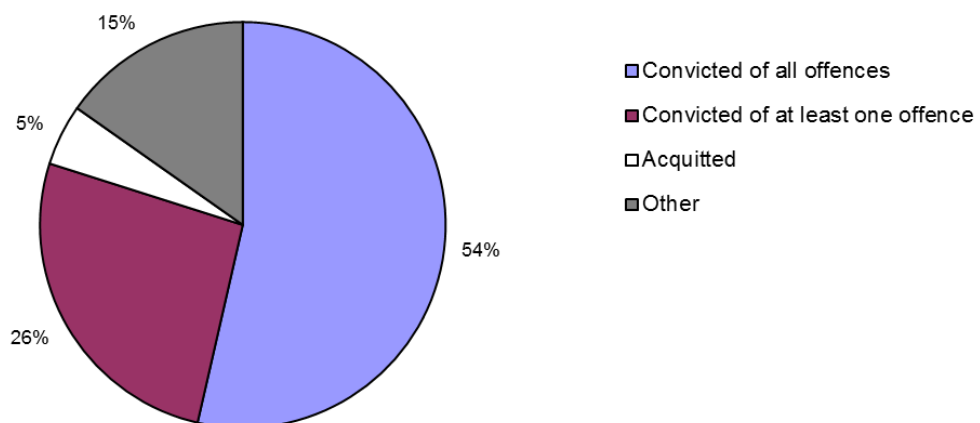
- During the first three quarters of 2013/14, 1,765 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was an increase of 19.3% on the equivalent period in 2012/13 (1,480).
- Of these defendants, 84.4% were convicted, 14.7% were acquitted and the remaining 0.9% had an 'other' outcome.

- The conviction rate was similar to the corresponding period of 2012/13 with a 0.3% increase from 84.1%.

#### **Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome and PPS Region / Function (Table 5b)**

- A total of 25,074 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the first three quarters of the financial year, a decrease of 10.9% on 2012/13 (28,146).
- Of the defendants dealt with during the current period, 79.9% were convicted, 4.9% were acquitted and 15.2% had an 'other' outcome.
- Comparing the first nine months of 2012/13 and 2013/14, the conviction rate rose by 0.7% from 79.2%.

**Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome  
Quarters 1-3 2013/14**





**Table 1a: Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>						Number of files
Quarters	File Type <sup>3</sup>	Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-3 2013/14	Indictable	515	299	379	311	16	1,520	
	Hybrid	4,829	3,467	3,721	3,506	622	16,145	
	Summary	4,386	4,286	4,229	4,516	579	17,996	
	<b>All Files</b>	<b>9,730</b>	<b>8,052</b>	<b>8,329</b>	<b>8,333</b>	<b>1,217</b>	<b>35,661</b>	
Q1-3 2012/13	Indictable	550	371	428	365	20	1,734	
	Hybrid	5,227	3,617	4,096	3,833	588	17,361	
	Summary	4,773	4,162	4,549	5,201	507	19,192	
	<b>All Files</b>	<b>10,550</b>	<b>8,150</b>	<b>9,073</b>	<b>9,399</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>38,287</b>	
<b>% Change (Files Received) 2012/13 to 2013/14</b>		<b>-7.8%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>	<b>-8.2%</b>	<b>-11.3%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>-6.9%</b>	

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-3 (Q1-3) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

<sup>2</sup> Headquarters Sections deal with specialist work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy and High Court and International Matters.

<sup>3</sup> See explanatory notes, page 18.

**Table 1b: Files Received from Police by Recorded Crime Offence Group**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

Recorded Crime Offence Group <sup>2</sup>	Number of files					
	Q1-3 2013/14		Q1-3 2012/13		Change (2012/13 to 2013/14)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Violence against the person	8,476	37.6%	9,347	38.2%	-871	-9.3%
Sexual offences	838	3.7%	908	3.7%	-70	-7.7%
Robbery	118	0.5%	173	0.7%	-55	-31.8%
Burglary	889	3.9%	940	3.8%	-51	-5.4%
Theft	3,561	15.8%	3,704	15.1%	-143	-3.9%
Fraud and forgery	709	3.1%	822	3.4%	-113	-13.7%
Criminal damage	2,072	9.2%	2,299	9.4%	-227	-9.9%
Drug offences	2,453	10.9%	2,573	10.5%	-120	-4.7%
Other Miscellaneous offences	3,400	15.1%	3,689	15.1%	-289	-7.8%
<b>All Recorded Crime Files</b>	<b>22,516</b>		<b>24,455</b>		<b>-1,939</b>	<b>-7.9%</b>
Other files (Non-notifiable offences)	<b>11,761</b>		<b>12,544</b>		<b>-783</b>	<b>-6.2%</b>
<b>All Files</b>	<b>34,277</b>		<b>36,999</b>		<b>-2,722</b>	<b>-7.4%</b>

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-3 (Q1-3) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

<sup>2</sup> See explanatory notes, page 18.

**Table 1c: Files Submitted to PPS Departmental Section by Source Department / Agency**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

Department / Agency	Number of files					
	Q1-3 2013/14		Q1-3 2012/13		Change (2012/13 to 2013/14)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Dept. for Social Development	488	41.1%	469	43.3%	19	4.1%
Driver and Vehicle Agency	438	36.9%	394	36.4%	44	11.2%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division	52	4.4%	62	5.7%	-10	-16.1%
NI Environment Agency	60	5.1%	57	5.3%	3	5.3%
HM Revenue and Customs	28	2.4%	17	1.6%	11	64.7%
Dept. of Enterprise Trade and Investment	13	1.1%	8	0.7%	5	62.5%
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	20	1.7%	20	1.8%	0	0%
Health and Safety Executive	6	0.5%	12	1.1%	-6	-50.0%
Other	81	6.8%	43	4.0%	38	88.4%
<b>All Departments / Agencies</b>	<b>1,186</b>		<b>1,082</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>9.6%</b>

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-3 (Q1-3) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

**Table 2: Information Requests Submitted to Police by Request Type and PPS Region / Function**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>						Number of requests
Quarters	Request Type <sup>3</sup>	Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-3 2013/14	Full File Request	688	542	457	839	12	2,538	
	Decision Information Request	1,578	1,406	1,622	1,335	27	5,968	
	Post Decision Information Request	3,683	2,350	2,262	2,671	10	10,976	
	No Decision	19	6	2	60	0	87	
	<b>All Requests Submitted</b>	<b>5,968</b>	<b>4,304</b>	<b>4,343</b>	<b>4,905</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>19,569</b>	
Q1-3 2012/13	Full File Request	682	543	482	807	10	2,524	
	Decision Information Request	1,559	840	1,864	960	43	5,266	
	Post Decision Information Request	4,198	2,043	2,359	2,678	8	11,286	
	No Decision	8	16	3	32	1	60	
	<b>All Requests Submitted</b>	<b>6,447</b>	<b>3,442</b>	<b>4,708</b>	<b>4,477</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>19,136</b>	
<b>% Change (Requests Submitted) 2012/13 to 2013/14</b>		<b>-7.4%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>-7.8%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>-21.0%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-3 (Q1-3) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

<sup>2</sup> Headquarters Sections deal with specialist work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy and High Court and International Matters.

<sup>3</sup> See explanatory notes, page 18.

**Table 3a: Prosecutorial Decisions Issued by Decision Type and PPS Region / Function**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

			Number of persons (decisions issued)					
			PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>					
			Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Type of Decision <sup>3</sup>		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-3 2013/14	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	446	280	347	385	148	1,606
		Summary prosecution	6,974	5,671	5,875	5,706	1,065	25,291
	Diversion	Caution	853	813	900	920	3	3,489
		Informed warning	122	135	195	64	3	519
		Youth conference	125	68	84	104	0	381
		Other	42	37	150	69	0	298
	No Prosecution		3,199	2,544	2,851	2,601	197	11,392
	<b>All Decisions Issued</b>		<b>11,761</b>	<b>9,548</b>	<b>10,402</b>	<b>9,849</b>	<b>1,416</b>	<b>42,976</b>
Q1-3 2012/13	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	533	321	352	351	141	1,698
		Summary prosecution	7,810	5,317	5,958	7,042	959	27,086
	Diversion	Caution	1,062	966	1,103	1,068	3	4,202
		Informed warning	216	171	210	96	0	693
		Youth conference	63	80	111	83	0	337
		Other	60	32	112	49	0	253
	No Prosecution		3,738	3,190	2,878	3,255	171	13,232
	<b>All Decisions Issued</b>		<b>13,482</b>	<b>10,077</b>	<b>10,724</b>	<b>11,944</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>47,501</b>
<b>% Change (Decisions Issued) 2012/13 to 2013/14</b>			<b>-12.8%</b>	<b>-5.2%</b>	<b>-3.0%</b>	<b>-17.5%</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>-9.5%</b>

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-3 (Q1-3) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

<sup>2</sup> Headquarters Sections deal with specialist work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy and High Court and International Matters.

<sup>3</sup> See explanatory notes, page 19.

**Table 3b: Prosecutorial Decisions Issued - Reasons for No Prosecution by PPS Region / Function**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>						Number of persons (decisions issued)
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	Reason for no prosecution <sup>3</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-3 2013/14	Did not pass the evidential test	3,018	2,409	2,736	2,511	190	10,864	
	Did not pass the public interest test	181	135	115	90	7	528	
	<b>All no prosecution decisions</b>	<b>3,199</b>	<b>2,544</b>	<b>2,851</b>	<b>2,601</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>11,392</b>	
Q1-3 2012/13	Did not pass the evidential test	3,498	2,985	2,767	3,145	168	12,563	
	Did not pass the public interest test	240	205	111	110	3	669	
	<b>All no prosecution decisions</b>	<b>3,738</b>	<b>3,190</b>	<b>2,878</b>	<b>3,255</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>13,232</b>	
<b>% Change (No prosecution decisions issued) 2012/13 to 2013/14</b>		<b>-14.4%</b>	<b>-20.3%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>-20.1%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>-13.9%</b>	

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-3 (Q1-3) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

<sup>2</sup> Headquarters Sections deal with specialist work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy and High Court and International Matters.

<sup>3</sup> See explanatory notes, page 19.

**Table 3c: Average Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions  
by Decision Type (PPS Regions)**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

			Average (calendar) days
Quarters	Type of Decision <sup>2</sup>		All Regions
Q1-3 2013/14	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	160
		Summary prosecution	21
	Diversion	Caution	15
		Informed warning	17
		Youth conference	16
		Other	20
	No Prosecution		41
Q1-3 2012/13	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	215
		Summary prosecution	30
	Diversion	Caution	19
		Informed warning	14
		Youth conference	22
		Other	29
	No Prosecution		54

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-3 (Q1-3) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

<sup>2</sup> Average days includes time taken for police to respond to decision information requests (see explanatory notes, page 19).

**Table 4: Summonses Issued in Police Cases by Service Method and PPS Region**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

		Number of summonses				
		PPS Region				
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	All Regions
Quarters	Service Method <sup>2</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-3 2013/14	Postal Service	4,500	4,280	3,850	3,932	16,562
	Personal Service	3,065	2,063	1,281	1,342	7,751
	<b>All Summonses</b>	<b>7,565</b>	<b>6,343</b>	<b>5,131</b>	<b>5,274</b>	<b>24,313</b>
Q1-3 2012/13	Postal Service	5,624	3,662	3,691	4,966	17,943
	Personal Service	4,713	1,332	1,389	1,518	8,952
	<b>All Summonses</b>	<b>10,337</b>	<b>4,994</b>	<b>5,080</b>	<b>6,484</b>	<b>26,895</b>
<b>% Change (Summonses Issued) 2012/13 to 2013/14</b>		<b>-26.8%</b>	<b>27.0%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>-18.7%</b>	<b>-9.6%</b>

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-3 (Q1-3) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

<sup>2</sup> See explanatory notes, page 20.



**Table 5a: Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court by Outcome and PPS Region / Function**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

		Number of persons (defendants)					
		PPS Region / Function					
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarter	Outcome <sup>2</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-3 2013/14	Convicted of all offences	175	122	149	83	93	622
	Convicted of at least one offence	312	182	137	162	75	868
	Acquitted	108	27	50	66	9	260
	Other	2	4	2	7	0	15
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>1,765</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>81.6%</b>	<b>90.7%</b>	<b>84.6%</b>	<b>77.0%</b>	<b>94.9%</b>	<b>84.4%</b>
Q1-3 2012/13	Convicted of all offences	173	115	118	107	65	578
	Convicted of at least one offence	231	120	154	134	28	667
	Acquitted	80	44	44	48	12	228
	Other	4	0	1	2	0	7
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1,480</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>82.8%</b>	<b>84.2%</b>	<b>85.8%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>84.1%</b>
<b>% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2012/13 to 2013/14</b>		<b>22.3%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>68.6%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Q1-3 reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

<sup>2</sup> See explanatory notes, page 20.

**Table 5b: Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome and PPS Region / Function**

Quarters 1-3 2012/13 and Quarters 1-3 2013/14 <sup>1</sup>

		Number of persons (defendants)					
		PPS Region / Function					
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarter	Outcome <sup>2</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-3 2013/14	Convicted of all offences	3,660	2,796	3,405	3,034	541	13,436
	Convicted of at least one offence	1,751	1,519	1,525	1,644	158	6,597
	Acquitted	448	190	327	238	19	1,222
	Other	1,001	824	1,005	860	129	3,819
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>6,860</b>	<b>5,329</b>	<b>6,262</b>	<b>5,776</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>25,074</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>78.9%</b>	<b>81.0%</b>	<b>78.7%</b>	<b>81.0%</b>	<b>82.5%</b>	<b>79.9%</b>
Q1-3 2012/13	Convicted of all offences	4,203	2,813	3,231	3,676	729	14,652
	Convicted of at least one offence	2,281	1,522	1,590	2,048	211	7,652
	Acquitted	634	261	296	240	19	1,450
	Other	1,293	929	876	1,154	140	4,392
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>8,411</b>	<b>5,525</b>	<b>5,993</b>	<b>7,118</b>	<b>1,099</b>	<b>28,146</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>78.5%</b>	<b>80.4%</b>	<b>80.4%</b>	<b>85.5%</b>	<b>79.2%</b>
<b>% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2012/13 to 2013/14</b>		<b>-18.4%</b>	<b>-3.5%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>-18.9%</b>	<b>-22.9%</b>	<b>-10.9%</b>

<sup>1</sup> 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Q1-3 reflect the period from 1 April to 31 December.

<sup>2</sup> See explanatory notes, page 20.

## Explanatory Notes

### **Table 1a**

A file may refer to one or more individuals. 'File type' is based on the 'primary' offence (generally the most serious offence in terms of the potential penalties in law) in each case at the time the file is submitted to PPS. In general, *summary offences* relate to less serious criminal behaviour and are tried in the Magistrates' Court before a District Judge. *Indictable offences* relate to more serious criminal behaviour and are tried at the Crown Court before a judge, and in most cases, a jury. There are a number of *hybrid offences* which may be tried at either the Magistrates' or Crown Court, for example: theft; assault occasioning actual bodily harm, etc. For these offences, on taking a decision to prosecute, the Public Prosecutor must also decide whether the defendant should be tried in the Magistrates' Court or the Crown Court. In making this decision the prosecutor will consider whether the Magistrates' Court is the appropriate venue in that it has sufficient sentencing powers in relation to the gravity of the offence. For a range of offences, the defendant may also elect for trial in the Crown Court.

The figures include all files submitted by police (Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast / Londonderry Harbour Police and British Transport Police), the Office of the Police Ombudsman and a range of statutory authorities, for example the Driver and Vehicle Agency and HM Revenue and Customs. It should be noted that files submitted by the Office of the Police Ombudsman may be considered by prosecutors in the regional offices or Headquarters.

### **Table 1b**

The classification used reflects the Home Office Recorded Crime Offence Categories. Recorded crime figures (sometimes referred to as 'notifiable' offences) detail those crimes and offences, including attempts, recorded by the police, which are deemed to be indictable, or triable-either-way (hybrid). Certain closely associated summary offences are also counted in the recorded crime figures.

Files have been assigned to the respective categories on the basis of the 'primary' offence (see above) in each case at the time the file is submitted to PPS from police.

'Police' includes the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast / Londonderry Harbour Police and British Transport Police. Files received by the PPS Regions / Headquarters from the Office of the Police Ombudsman are excluded.

### **Table 2**

The various types of request are defined as follows:

- *Full file requests* are designed to allow the PPS to ask the PSNI for a full file as defined in the relevant protocols.
- A *decision information request (DIR)* is issued by PPS to police where the evidence and information contained in an investigation file is incomplete and a further written report or action is required before a prosecutorial decision can be taken.
- *Post decision information requests* are designed to allow the PPS to ask the PSNI to gather additional evidential material or provide other information required at some further stage in the prosecution process (e.g. for trial).
- Finally a '*no decision*' *decision information request* may issue when, on the evidence submitted by police in an investigation file, it is not possible to take a prosecution decision and it is not reasonable to issue a detailed DIR having regard to the number or type of deficiencies in the file.

### **Table 3a**

More than one prosecutorial decision may be recorded against any individual within a case. Therefore 'type of decision' refers to the most serious decision issued, in the following order: Indictable prosecution; summary prosecution; diversion; and no prosecution. A number of types of prosecutorial decision are available to the prosecutor, as follows:

- *Indictable prosecution* applies in the more serious offences which may be heard in the Crown Court.
- *Summary prosecution* applies to cases which may be heard in the Magistrates' Courts.
- A *caution* is a formal reprimand administered by the police. Whilst it is not a conviction it is recorded on a person's criminal record for a period of 30 months for youths and 5 years for adults.
- An *informed warning* is also a formal reprimand administered by police and is recorded on a person's criminal record for a period of 12 months.
- A *diversionary youth conference* is an alternative to prosecution in court and may be used in cases where the defendant is a youth. This type of restorative conference may involve a number of parties, including the defendant, the victim and police. A youth conference is a formal process, and although not a conviction, is recorded on a person's criminal record for a period of 30 months.
- '*Other*' *diversionary options* include referrals to the NI Driver Improvement Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme. It should be noted that diversionary options are only available to prosecutors if the defendant admits that he/she has committed the offence and agrees to accept and participate in the diversionary option.
- A *decision for no prosecution* will be taken if the prosecutor decides that in any case being considered there is insufficient evidence or that it is not in the public interest to prosecute (see note regarding the Test for Prosecution below).

### **Table 3b**

Prosecutions are initiated where the prosecutor is satisfied that the Test for Prosecution is met. There are two aspects to the Test:

- a) Whether the evidence which can be offered in court is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction (the evidential test); and
- b) Whether prosecution is required in the public interest (the public interest test).

Each of these stages must be separately considered but a decision whether or not a prosecution is in the public interest can only arise when the evidential test has been satisfied.

### **Table 3c**

As mentioned in note to Table 3a, more than one prosecutorial decision may be recorded against any individual within a case. Therefore these figures are based on the first decision issued. Monitoring covers the period in calendar days from date initial papers (charge cases only) or full file is received by the PPS to the date the prosecutorial decision is issued. This excludes defendants for whom a warrant has been issued but includes any time taken for police to respond to decision information requests (see note to Table 2 above). Average days for indictable prosecution decisions include the time taken for the prosecutor's decision and for case preparation (i.e. where appropriate, ensuring that the case is ready for court). In indictable cases case preparation includes time required for the preparation of committal papers which contain the evidence, such as statements, exhibits etc., to be presented to the Crown Court. It may also include consideration of duties of disclosure by the prosecutor and applications to be made to the court.

**Table 4**

Information refers to police cases only. A summons may be served on a defendant either by post, or via a personal summons served by the police. The defendant will be required to attend court on the date stated on the summons. Following the commencement of Rule 2(6) of the Magistrates' Courts (Amendment No. 2) Rules 2009, in early 2010, the large majority of offences can now be dealt with by way of a postal summons. The only exceptions relate to corporate defendants, vulnerable defendants and those defendants who have not responded to a postal summons.

More than one summons may be issued in respect of an individual defendant in a case. For example, if the defendant does not attend court on the day stated on an initial postal summons, this will generally be followed up by a personal summons served by police.

**Table 5a**

Includes all defendants dealt with in the Crown Court during the period, based on results data supplied by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (via the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism). Proceedings in the Crown Court generally follow the issue of a decision by PPS to prosecute on indictment. The category 'acquitted' includes the following outcomes: acquittals, acquittals by direction, No Bills, no evidence offered – defendant acquitted, left on books, proceedings stayed, unfit to plead – but found that he/she did not do the act, no case to answer - granted. 'Other' Includes defendant deceased, withdrawal – all charges, bound over for not having shown cause, bound over where charge withdrawn, withdrawn due to diversionary route. It should be noted that if an individual is involved in more than one case which is resulted during this period, they will be counted as a separate defendant on each occasion.

**Table 5b**

Includes all defendants dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the period, based on results data supplied by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (via the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism). Data reflect the number of persons where PPS has taken a decision to prosecute summarily; i.e. defendants against whom charges were withdrawn prior to decision are excluded. The category 'acquitted' includes the following outcomes: dismissed; no case to answer granted; and proceedings stayed. 'Other' includes: defendant deceased; withdrawal – all charges; bound over for not having shown cause; bound over where charge withdrawn; withdrawn due to diversionary route. Excludes persons returned for trial in the Crown Court. It should be noted that if an individual is involved in more than one case which is resulted during this period, they will be counted as a separate defendant on each occasion.

**Tables 5a and 5b**

Conviction rates are calculated on the basis of the number of persons convicted as a percentage of all persons dealt with during the period.

## **User Information**

### **Data sources and validations**

The information presented in this bulletin is derived from the Case Management System (CMS), the main operational system in use within the PPS. This is a 'live' system with data being input on a daily basis.

It should be noted that the CMS is also linked to the CJSNI's Causeway data sharing mechanism. The first phase of Causeway ('DSM 0'), introduced in 2005/06, allowed police to submit files to the PPS electronically. The most recent phase ('DSM 1') was launched at the end of November 2009 and broadened the portfolio of information shared electronically. For example PPS are now supplied with court results by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service which feed into the PPS Case Management System via Causeway.

The information is extracted using Business Objects. It is then validated and quality assured to ensure that the data is reliable and robust for use. Any inconsistencies are reported back to operational staff or to the PPS Information and Communications Technology Branch. If required, any necessary amendments are then made to the data.

All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change.

### **Rounding conventions**

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and as a consequence some percentages may not sum to 100.

### **Official Statistics**

These are 'Official Statistics' as defined in Section 6 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. Statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are seconded to the PPS and are responsible for ensuring that the statistics produced comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The PPS would value any feedback on this report and welcome recommendations on the future addition of data that may be of interest to readers. Contact details are provided overleaf.

### **Future publications**

The next Statistical Bulletin, covering the full financial year (1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014), will be published on 19 June 2014.

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